I CLAIM:

1. A method of processing meat which comprises the steps of contacting bodies of meat with a treating solution; agitating said bodies of meat in contact with said treatment solution at a temperature of substantially 45°F to 60°F until said bodies of meat are substantially dry; and recovering said bodies of meat in a substantially dry state.

2. A method of processing meat comprising the steps of:

(a) contacting bodies of meat with a treating solution;

(b) heating said bodies of meat in contact with said treating solution in an agitator to a predetermined elevated temperature and maintaining said temperature substantially constant while agitating said meat for a period of time sufficient to distribute the treating solution in the meat;

(c) thereafter cooling the bodies of meat in said agitator while continuing to agitate the meat; and

(d) recovering said bodies of meat in a substantially dry state from said agitator.

3. The method defined in claim 2 wherein said bodies of meat are contacted with said treating solution by injecting said bodies of meat with an inject at a temperature less than said elevated temperature and said agitator is a rotary paddle massager or a tumbler.

4. The method defined in claim 3 wherein said elevated temperature is between substantially 45°F and 60°F, said temperature less than said elevated temperature is substantially 15° to 40°F below said elevated temperature and the meat is cooled by 15° to 40°F below said elevated temperature in step (c).

5. The method defined in claim 2 wherein said elevated temperature is controlled in step (b)by measuring directly a temperature of the bodies of meat in said agitator and regulating a temperature of said agitator in response to the measured temperature.

6. The method defined in claim 5 wherein said temperature of the bodies of meat in said agitator is measured by causing said bodies of meat to contact directly a temperature sensor mounted in a wall of the agitator.

7. The method defined in claim 5 wherein said temperature of the bodies of meat in said agitator is measured by inserting a temperature measuring sensor into bodies of meat in said agitator.

8. The method defined in claim 2 wherein said bodies of meat are selectively heated and cooled in said agitator by selectively passing a heated or cooled fluid through a jacket thereof.

9. A method processing meat which comprises the steps of contacting bodies of meat with a treating solution; agitating said bodies of meat in contact with said treatment solution at a predetermined temperature until said bodies of meat are substantially dry while controlling said temperature within ± 2°F; and recovering said bodies of meat in a substantially dry state.

10. The method defined in claim 9 wherein said temperature is controlled by measuring directly a temperature of the bodies of meat during agitation thereof by contact of a sensor with the bodies of meat, and regulating a temperature of a vessel in which said bodies of meat are agitated in response to the measured temperature.

11. An apparatus for processing meat which comprises:

a vessel for receiving bodies of meat in contact with a treating liquid and for agitating said bodies of meat to distribute said treating liquid in said bodies of meat; and

means for selectively heating and cooling said vessel during the agitation of said bodies of meat therein.

12. The apparatus defined in claim 11 wherein said vessel has a jacket, said means for selectively heating an cooling said vessel comprising a refrigeration unit for

circulating a cooling liquid through said jacket and a heater for passing a heating liquid through said jacket.

13. The apparatus defined in claim 11, further comprising a temperature sensor positioned for direct contact with bodies of meat in said vessel and operatively connected to said means for selectively heating and cooling said vessel for controlling a temperature of said vessel during the agitation of said bodies of meat therein.

14. The apparatus defined in claim 13 wherein said temperature sensor extends through a wall of said vessel and is thermally insulated therefrom to respond directly to a surface temperature of bodies of meat in said vessel.

15. The apparatus defined in claim 13 wherein said temperature sensor is provided with a member capable of being thrust into said vessel to pierce a body of meat therein.

16. The apparatus defined in claim 15 wherein said member has a plurality of sensing regions along a length thereof for providing an average temperature of the body of meat pierced thereby.

17. The apparatus defined in claim 11 wherein said vessel is a massager having a massaging drum formed with a

temperature control jacket and a rotary paddle in said drum, said means for selectively heating and cooling said vessel including means for selectively circulating a heated and a cooled liquid through said jacket, said apparatus further comprising programming means for raising a temperature of said bodies of meat in said massaging drum to a predetermined elevated temperature while massaging said bodies of meat with a controlled torque of said rotary paddle.

18. The apparatus defined in claim 17, further comprising a temperature sensor positioned for direct contact with bodies of meat in said massaging drum and operatively connected to said means for selectively circulating said heated and a cooled liquid through said jacket for controlling a temperature of said massaging drum during the agitation of said bodies of meat therein.

19. The apparatus defined in claim 18 wherein said temperature sensor extends through a wall of said massaging drum and is thermally insulated therefrom to respond directly to a surface temperature of bodies of meat in said massaging drum.

20. The apparatus defined in claim 18 wherein said temperature sensor is provided with a member capable of being thrust into an interior of said massaging drum to pierce a body of meat therein.